

Poppy's Magic and Miracle

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The following story will prove that even dairy goats are able to perform magic with miraculous outcomes!

Kim and I have bred Saanen goats for over 30 years and have been members of the DGSA since 1989. We enjoyed the period when we showed our "The Hive" goats successfully, had our own milk label and sold our cheese to the local gourmet market.

Tragic circumstances changed our lives. We are now committed "gran carers" of our beautiful grandson Jayden. These days, our "herd" exists of The Hive Poppy and her first kidder daughter The Hive Mimosa. And it is about our dear Poppy that makes this story worth sharing with you.

Poppy's breeding is rather special, with The Hive Petal as her grand dam on mum's side and The Hive Helga as her sire's dam. We therefore simply could not sell Poppy, when we were at a crossroad in our lives. Poppy represents literally the precious genes from all the Hive's breeding successes, including the fantastic well attached udders, known to other breeders to be associated with our prefix.

However, it was and still is rather tricky to juggle even two dairy goats with the changes in our family. Kim returned to his profession in hydrology in the field, sometimes for months. I moved to working for the Dyslexia SPELD Foundation as private

specialist teacher. Furthermore, we now were parenting Jayden and were involved in his education and development, coupled with the enormous costs and stresses of getting Jayden's case through the Family Court to Final Orders. (What a relief to Jayden's dad and us!)

The next challenge came when our lovely daughter, Mariska, was involved in a horrific car accident (caused by another driver) while Mariska was 8 months pregnant. A further demand on my limited energy levels was made, to support Mariska, Andrew and their little Flynn in this very difficult time!

Every morning and evening however, I put my cheek against Poppy's warm belly while milking her. I closed my eyes and sang to her. My respite and survival method!

Poppy kept milking for two years and even into a third. Never any worries; never any infections! Her young daughter Mimosa was her companion.

Then in autumn 2012, we decided to get both does in kid. Bevan Ravenhill offered us the use of his buck, Paperbark Gully Tjango, (with The Hive breeding on both sides) to service Poppy. With Poppy in the borrowed old trailer of our neighbours I stopped in Denmark on our way, as I had some electrical problems. A young worker attended to the issue, rehitched my trailer and called out to me that all was fixed. I paid the bill and Jayden and I went to Redmond with the now very keen goat!

After a successful mating we had just turned back onto the South Coast Highway, when to my shock I saw the trailer disappear from my car and roll over into the ditch, where it came to a crashing halt

against a huge tree trunk. Jayden was screaming, I simply went icy cold with the shock and all my muscles started to shake! (NEVER TRUST A THIRD PARTY TO HITCH YOUR TRAILER!) We ran along the road and descended carefully down to the completely wrecked trailer. My heart stopped for a moment when I saw the blood pour from the upturned trailer base and heard Poppy groan and scream.

Some by passers stopped to assist. With a group of people we were able to roll the trailer back onto the wheels (poor Poppy!), rip the roof off and I climbed in to kick the buckled back gates open. Poppy was bleeding from her eyes and her nostrils and she must have been terribly bruised. However, she hopped onto her legs and strutted straight to our car, where she stood and waited for me to lift her into the boot. With other words: "Just take me home please!" I was so grateful for the homeopathic remedy kit in my handbag!

A kind tourist gave us a tarp to use in the back of my Subaru Forester and Poppy climbed in with some lifting work. She stood the entire way, in great pain, continuously grunting in shock. Jayden sat on the back seat and gently stroked her, while getting covered with blood.

With Kim still being away for his work, the next few days were a real challenge. I virtually lived in that shed until we were sure that Poppy was stable. Lots of drips, needles, homeopathics, propylene glycol, attending to nutrition and warmth, dressing etc., and the vet was very worried about possible swelling on her brain. We must have had our feeding regime correct, because she had no broken bones. I was exhausted but Poppy healed well. She lost sight in one

eye for two months and then it completely healed thanks to homeopathics, kilo's of Goji berries and carrots! It is now beautiful and clear.

Six weeks later, Poppy was on heat again and we brought her to the buck in our brand new trailer. Mimosa also was pretty noisy that day and wagging her tail, so both does were presented to Bevan Ravenhill's buck. Poppy stood beautifully, but Mimosa was not quite ready yet. Bevan suggested that we could take Tjango with us to mate Mimosa and then return him. I was not too keen, because I had seen Tjango clear a high enclosure in the sheering shed and he behaved quite nervously when we tried to approach him. However, Kim and Bevan loaded Tjango and thought that it would be all right!

Back home, Kim attended to Jayden, while I settled the goats. It was dark and quite tricky to lead the nervous buck into the paddock and shed, where the goats were tied on. Tjango had not been handled very much. He was very jumpy. I did some "goat-whispering". He calmed down but each time I did a step he would twist himself around me and I had to start from scratch. It took 20 minutes to do three metres. Finally we came near the open gate. The torch light reflected from the shiny gate and Tjango took an almighty leap into the air taking me with him! I landed face down into the mud with two broken ribs (elbow under my chest), a broken wrist and a damaged nerve in my arm. The next day Kim had to leave to go back to his work up north. For the next weeks I had to milk with one hand, cook with one hand, help Jayden with one hand, teach with one hand and somehow drive!

In that same very hot and dry period we lost all our water, which is stored in our massive underground concrete water reservoirs. (Tourists, bushwalking, had dislodged our water filter system when they had a peek in the stainless steel "rocket". We now have a lock on the lid!!) So here I was, carting water in the back of my car for the house and the animals. The garden, orchard and nut trees looked terrible and we lost so much food!

But we plodded on and Jayden was a fantastic little helper. Both does were in kid and the creek filled the tanks again. Then, to our sadness, we found Poppy with two tiny little dead babies. She obviously had not been recovered sufficiently after all the adrenaline of her accident. I had to teach that morning and asked the vet to attend to her.

When I came home, I found a note from the vet on the door: "Poppy all cleaned out. Found two more fetuses. Gave her hormones to clean her out and a long acting antibiotic shot. Should be all right now. Ring me if she does not recover."

We continued to milk Poppy, but she decided to do a phantom pregnancy. Her belly was quite large. Poppy had done that the previous year, when we were running her through. She is just such a keen breeder and mum. Then, a month before the actual due date, Poppy suddenly stopped producing milk. On the day that Poppy and Mimosa were due to kid, we found Poppy with a very wet rear end and knew that she was having a cloud burst. Mariska came that day with her two little ones.

She said: "Mum, do you know that you have kids on the hill?...When we hopped out of the car, we could hear little goat voices".

My reply: "Yes, that must be Mimosa's kids. I will go up and check her".

Young Flynn and Jayden followed me curiously and there was Mimosa, wagging her tail in discomfort, but still dry and without kids. I scratched my head when I came into the shed and found Poppy with a most beautiful buck kid on her side and cleaning a freshly born pretty doe kid. Poppy had performed her "Magic" and "Miracle". The vet still can't believe this story and has no explanation for the fact that two of Poppy's six babies remained in her uterus, despite all the trauma and treatments!

Magic has been sold to South West WA breeders, to "offer" The Hive genes to their breeding program. Miracle will stay with us to continue the amazing The Hive tradition here on the farm.

On a sad final note: Mimosa was in trouble. It took me till 3am to assist her to get her 3.5 kilo beautiful single doe kid out. Unfortunately, it had already died and we could not revive her. Mimosa had almost no milk. I then decided to milk her four times daily, give her homeopathic remedies for milk production and special herb concentrates. She now has a lovely udder and produces lots of milk.

